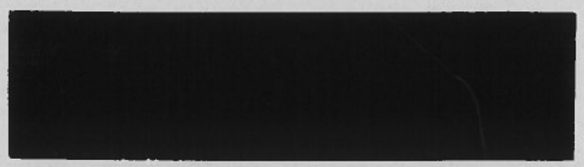
FRONTLINE

Apartheid Part V: 1987



FRONTLINE #520

Apartheid Part V: 1987

FRONTLINE is made possible by grants from this station, other public television stations nationwide, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

This program was originally broadcast on PBS on December 16, 1987

Copyright © 1987 WGBH Educational Foundation

Under no circumstances may this transcript or matters contained herein be reproduced or otherwise used for any purpose beyond the private use of the recipient (other than for newspaper coverage, purposes of reference, discussion, and review) without prior written consent of WGBH Educational Foundation. For information about reproduction and bulk rates, contact:

WGBH Transcripts
125 Western Avenue
Boston, MA 02134
(617)-492-2777

CONTENTS: Apartheid Part V: 1987

Introduction	1
Text	1
Production Credits	27
Participants List	29
WGBH Publications and Video/Film Services	30

For eight days in July, 1987, dissident white Afrikaners met with black leaders from the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), South Africa's leading black liberation movement. An unprecedented confrontation in the struggle for South Africa's future is the subject of Part V of "Apartheid."

APARTHEID: A CHRONOLOGY

1652	First Dutch settlement in South Africa
1806	British gain control of Cape from Dutch
1835-43	Boer farmers move inland on Great Trek
1867	Diamonds discovered
1886	Gold discovered
1889-1902	The Anglo-Boer War
1910	British create the Union of South Africa
1912	The African National Congress forms
1913	Native Land Act prohibits blacks from buying land outside of native "reserves," then 7.3% of the country
1948	Nationalist party, elected on apartheid slogan, begins to institute new segregation policies
1955	Sixty thousand Sophiatown residents forcibly removed from homes
1959	Pan-African Congress forms
1960	Sharpeville shootings: sixty-nine blacks die in protests over pass laws; Government outlaws ANC and PAC; Government arrests 5000 in Pondoland revolt
1961	Verwoerd declares South Africa a republic, breaking ties with Britain
1963	Long-term detention without trial begins; Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders convicted of sabotage
1966	3.5 million Africans removed from cities to homelands under Vorster's homelands policy
1973	Durban workers strike revives black protest
1974	3 million Transkei blacks lose South African citizenship under Vorster policy of Bantu independence; Mozambique gains independence from Portugal, fueling black consciousness movement in South Africa
1976	Soweto uprising begins on June 16
1977	Steven Biko dies in prison from brain damage in prison
1978	Botha creates council governments for townships
1983	United Democratic Front forms to oppose Botha's new constitution
1984	Indian and colored m.p.'s elected to new Tri-cameral Parliament; Botha becomes state president with power to override Parliament; Blacks in Vaal rise up against council, & army occupies townships
1985	Students organize school boycotts; Foreign credit cutoffs force South Africa to suspend debt repayment
1986	COSATU organizes May Day and June 16 strikes; Botha declares state of emergency: 20,000 imprisoned without trial, press censorship begins
1987	Tens of thousands jailed in Johannesburg; Forty thousand COSATU miners strike in August; Gov't releases ANC leader Govan Mbeki from prison, but restricts his freedom of speech

INTRODUCTION

JUDY WOODRUFF
Good evening. Tonight we conclude our special five-part FRONTLINE series on South Africa, called "Apartheid."

The first four programs traced over three hundred years of racial history in that troubled land--a history of white repression and black rebellion.

But South Africa's history is not a simple one--not always just a story of white versus black.

In recent years, there have been several meetings, most of them held in secret, between white South Africans--businessmen and intellectuals--and the outlawed African National Congress, regarded by many as the leading anti-apartheid organization and a kind of government in exile for a future South Africa.

We were interested in those secret meetings. What was discussed? Could they yield any clues about the future of South Africa?

Last summer we learned of secret plans for another meeting between dissident white Afrikaners and the ANC set for July in the West African country of Senegal.

FRONTLINE producer Irv Drasnin, who had contacts with the exiled ANC at their headquarters in Zambia, traveled to Africa to negotiate access to the conference.

This is his report on what he saw and heard. In the face of the dark and terrible events in South Africa, it is a small story with a human face--a story of South Africans--black and white--talking about the future of their country.

IRV DRASNIN
Dakar, the capital of Senegal, on the northwest coast of Africa.

A marketplace of history, once known as the Paris of West Africa, Dakar may one day be remembered for its place in the struggle for South Africa.

Traditional drumbeats celebrate the rites of statecraft, of high-level diplomacy. On this day, Dakar is awaiting the arrival of black and white South Africans.

These are travelers from the last enclave of white power on a black-ruled continent, members of South Africa's white tribe: Afrikaners.

IRV DRASNIN continued
For most of them, it's a journey into the unknown, to places they've never been, to hold forbidden talks with an outlawed opposition they've never met--the African National Congress, the ANC.

FREDERICK VAN ZYL SLABBERT, Afrikaner
They're not sure what South Africa would be like if it's governed by the ANC. I mean, this is why they've come to talk. They've come to try and find out what it's all about. But in that sense, if they are convinced, or let me put it this way, if the ANC can convince them that there's a future beyond apartheid for them in an ANC South Africa, they will not be afraid of them. Certainly not.

IRV DRASNIN
Among them are academics and clergy, professionals and politicians, an intellectual cross section of Afrikanerdom--that has no firsthand knowledge of the ANC or its leaders.

In South Africa, even possessing ANC writings is a crime.

Alex Boraine: This is the official magazine of the ANC. It's very poor. It really is.

Afrikaner: I mean, the two of them together will get you locked up for what, six years?

Alex Boraine: I would think so. This is alright though, it's published in South Africa.

IRV DRASNIN
What's published in South Africa, and shown in films like this on government-controlled television, is the ANC--remote and menacing--marching on white South Africa, its leaders depicted not so much as political exiles but as refugees from a police file. Three of them: Pallo Jordon, Mac Maharaj, and Thabo Mbeki, all members of the ANC's top leadership, would be in Dakar.

It's despite this government profile of the ANC that the Afrikaner delegation headed for Dakar. They arrived in the belief that, without the ANC, there can be no end to South Africa's racial strife.

But landing near midnight, these travelers didn't know what to expect, what they'd see or hear. They couldn't have expected Thabo Mbeki's first words.

Thabo Mbeki: My name is Thabo Mbeki. I'm an Afrikaner... (Laughter)

IRV DRASNIN
Known to each other only by reputation, as bitter adversaries, these South Africans could, for the first time, at least introduce themselves.

ANC delegate: I grew up in Capetown, educated in South Africa, the United States, and Great Britain. Now, a full-time worker for the African National Congress.

Afrikaner delegate: I'm a young Afrikaner. I'm proud to be a young Afrikaner. I'm a post graduate student at Stellenbosch Engineering.

ANC delegate: In 1960 the African National Congress was banned. In 1961, I left the country.

ANC delegate: I left South Africa in 1976 as a student at University of Zululand, as a result of the participation and involvement in the Soweto uprising of '76.

Afrikaner delegate: I'm a South African businessman. I'm the chief executive of a group called the Wooltru Group of Companies.

ANC delegate: And, if I have to describe myself, I'd like to refer to various publications like Africa Confidential, The Sunday Times, and the biographies of the CIA.

Afrikaner delegate: I'm one of the growing band of young Afrikaners who I'm told have been co-opted by the ANC, the communists, the Total Onslaught, and one other group I haven't heard of.

ANC delegate: In 1963, I left South Africa to study in East Germany. I studied history. I'm now in the process of making history.

IRV DRASNIN
Even outlawed, the ANC by all accounts represents the strongest, most popular black movement in South Africa.

THABO MBEKI, African National Congress
On our shoulders rests the task of removing the racist Pretoria regime, dismantling the apartheid system, and transforming South Africa into a united, democratic, nonracial country.

IRV DRASNIN
First Thabo Mbeki, then the Afrikaner leader--Frederick van zyl Slabbert --set the agenda.

FREDERICK VAN ZYL SLABBERT
Some of you have traveled far and suffered much pursuing freedom for your country. Some of you have ended up adopting strategies and supporting ideologies which some of us have difficulty in supporting or understanding, but which we want to find out more about. Despite that, and despite whatever differences there may be, we have come to talk to you because we realize your critical role in finding a resolution to our tragedy.

IRV DRASNIN
In South Africa, tragedy is often a study in contrasts, of two worlds--white South Africa, and black, separated by custom, by law, by force, and by history.

The tragedy is apartheid: a separation of the races, the domination of a white minority over a black majority--which made an institution of racism.

The signs may be mostly gone, the regulations may change, but the fact remains: apartheid still dominates the way people live, and think.

There are no black voices heard here, in the white-controlled Parliament, where the Afrikaner's Nationalist party has ruled since 1948.

There's no room for negotiation in the appeal of President P. W. Botha, because in the minds of most Afrikaners, there's only one answer to the question he asks of an all-white constituency.

P. W. Botha: **Do you want to be in the company of the African National Congress?**

IRV DRASNIN
To get this far, to be in the company of the African National Congress, these white South Africans have defied their government and misled families and friends about their destination and purpose.

To get this far, members of the ANC have traveled from Lusaka and London, from Stockholm and America--from more than a quarter-century of exile.

The fortunes of history, which drove them apart, have brought them together, for what in South Africa would be an illegal gathering, punishable by law.

Their mission, begun in secret for reasons of security, was carried on in secret, for reasons of diplomacy.

The formal meetings were closed to the press. Starting with the daily news briefings, we began to learn what happened when antagonists from a country so deeply divided, gathered in a room to discuss their future. Where did they begin?

ALEX BORAINE, Afrikaner
The question that demanded almost all our attention was, how can we insure a new South Africa free from apartheid but one which is free from being torn apart by polarizing forces? And as a consequence of this discussion, obviously a number of questions were posed: is there a place in a new South Africa for the maintenance and preservation of minority rights? What is the distinction between rights and privileges?

IRV DRASNIN
Now a critical issue was not black rights under white rule but the rights of the minority, of whites, in a future South Africa.

PALLO JORDAN, ANC
We are not willing to make any concessions to their desire for special privileges, special rights, or to their racist prejudices. We cannot concede those. I mean, that is not acceptable to us. But as for their right to live in South Africa, it is enshrined in the very preamble of the Freedom Charter: South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

IRV DRASNIN
For South Africans, it was a change of course: Afrikaners looking to the ANC for answers.

MAC MAHARAJ, ANC
We found their questions on our adhering to the armed struggle, their questions as to whether we are prepared to entertain a negotiated solution, their questions with regard to our effort to unify all democratic forces in our country who are opposing the apartheid system, serious questions.

IRV DRASNIN
The questions, and the need for answers, couldn't be confined to a meeting room or press conference. A tour of local industry became simply another place for them to talk, but a place for us to overhear the give and take, to collect fragments of the debate and its intensity.

Afrikaner delegate: **...in an armed struggle you don't just claim victory one day. You go and get a liberated zone...**

IRV DRASNIN
For most of them, ANC and Afrikaner alike, it was their first opportunity to confront one another, face to face.

ANC delegate: **Whatever answers we give you may not necessarily be the absolute answers in relation to the general consensus of our own people, you get the point?**

MAC MAHARAJ
A negotiated settlement has taken place in so many diverse ways, so many diverse ways. Somebody says to us, can you declare a truce?

IRV DRASNIN
Two leading Afrikaner intellectuals--Andre du Toit and Herman Gilomee--had heard of the ANC's Mac Maharaj, but never from him, directly.

Mac Maharaj: **What P. W. wants to say to us, first you lay down your arms and I keep my arms.**

Andre Du Toit: **That's saying he's not interested.**

Mac Maharaj: **And what needs to be said, what people need to say to him is: Botha, you don't want it, you are not serious. You cannot put this condition. It's not a necessary condition.**

Afrikaner delegate: **Here you have the white people cocooned in a certain position of fear, psychologically it's extremely difficult to get out of it ... and now when you start talking about...**

IRV DRASNIN
Two South African lawyers discussing politics, not something they could talk about in South Africa, not to each other.

Afrikaner delegate: **...and you tell them it could be a multi-party state, it must be a democracy, that sort of thing. They will ask you...**

ANC delegate: **Free press, freedom of association...**

Afrikaner delegate: **They will ask you very definitely, very straightforwardly, questions like "Would you permit white people to form an exclusive white party? Would you permit white people to form white schools, if they finance it themselves?"**

ANC delegate: **No, no...**

Afrikaner delegate: **White private schools, you're saying...**

ANC delegate: **No. This is it. In other words, that's an apartheid prescription--white residential areas, white schools, white churches and so on. We are here in the process of building a new nation. A nation of South Africans.**

ANC delegate: We really feel that it would be very arrogant for us to say it is going to be exactly like this. We would like the people of South Africa to themselves define what they want. And this culture, and the expectation seems to be that we have this kind of blueprint, you know, we've all got it down mathematically this one will move this way. We don't.

ANC delegate: For instance what will happen to the house you live in today which your parents spent money to build. Is the state going to take it? No man, why take it? Why take it? We're not going to go into South Africa and say whites get out of the beautiful houses, go into the townships because the townships were built by your own government. This is not going to happen. This is not going to happen at all.

Afrikaner delegate: And whites who own three or four houses. You see the difficulty we have.

ANC delegate: That problem will have to be resolved again in discussion by the people themselves, including the whites.

IRV DRASNIN
They had come intending to talk about strategies for changing South Africa, about future political and economic structures. But first they had to learn to talk to each other.

For Afrikaners especially, it was an unfamiliar role, a search for common ground.

FREDERICK VAN ZYL SLABBERT
The challenge that comes back to them is well, if you accept that the future has to be a nonracial democracy and that means that it involves a majority of people, how do you become a part of that struggle, for that majority to get to that democracy? I think this is the challenge that faces these people and that's what they're talking about and that's why there's a certain agony involved in the whole thing for them as well.

CHRISTO NEL, Afrikaner
The major theme that I see all the time, is still an ingrained, I think, fear that the blacks would do to us what we've done to them. That we are not willing to trust and accept the fundamental nonracial nature of the black philosophy. And so, what is being spoken about is, but how do we convince the people back home, and I think very often they want to project it to the people back home, and very often saying, how do I convince myself that I can trust you?

Andre du Toit: It seems to me that where the ANC has in my eyes to prove itself is whether it is prepared to allow right of dissent, right of opposition within the democratic opposition at this stage. And that's where the question of precisely what the role of the ANC in relation to other groupings, what the critical issues are there.

Irv Drasnin: Have they satisfied you on that point?

Andre du Toit: I don't think entirely. I think that we can go back to South Africa and that we have got a certain space for moving and defining our own objectives, but that we will go back with unresolved anxieties about just where the ANC's position is.

Irv Drasnin: Is it possible to come away some day with a situation that everyone can live with, Afrikaner and ANC?

Jan Gagiano, Afrikaner: I hope so but I don't think so. I sometimes get very pessimistic about... especially when I hear the ANC speak, and, I know the type of built-in resolution to maintain political power in the ranks of the Afrikaners.

IRV DRASNIN
The ranks of the Afrikaner are formidable. No army in Africa can challenge the military power of P. W. Botha. Behind the strident voice of Afrikaner nationalism lies the power of the state, and the government's willingness to use it. The South African armed forces are celebrating their 75th anniversary.

IRV DRASNIN (continued)
It's no small irony that it's also the 75th anniversary of the African National Congress, the oldest black nationalist movement in Africa.

For its first fifty years, the ANC sought nonviolent change through peaceful protest: demonstrations and petitions.

The government responded--with force, then by banning the ANC and sending many of its leaders to prison.

That's the historical perspective of those who were there, and who were imprisoned, and who came to Dakar, like Mac Maharaj.

MAC MAHARAJ
And yet, when you confront the question and they say, "The armed struggle, could you suspend it? It'll make it easier to mobilize people." And you say, wait, let us show you how we have sought for a negotiated solution. When we did not use armed struggle. When we used our millions to go to prison voluntarily; eight thousand five hundred went into the defiance campaign. We had the Freedom Charter formulated. We invited even the Nationalist party. We wrote letters to the prime minister, each prime minister at the time saying we are launching this campaign. We have this grievance. And they ignored us.

IRV DRASNIN
The ANC's response was the armed struggle, aimed first at strategic targets. Inevitably, the violence has spread, violence that often seems impossible for either the ANC or the government to control.

In the Afrikaner view of history, they fought the British for their political and cultural rights--and they would fight again to preserve them, even if against other South Africans.

There's no escaping the violence and its consequences--not in South Africa, not more than half-a-continent away, in Dakar. The causes of violence and who's to blame were a major issue here, an issue the government of South Africa would like to make an ideological battle as well.

THABO MBEKI
Those who haven't met the ANC, those who have relied, who have depended on what the regime says about the ANC, they think they know that the ANC is--an organization of killers, anti-white, murderers--controlled by some cunning, scheming, ruthless, Moscow KGB, somebody. And, and they believe that.

CHRISTO NEL
One of the first questions that was asked from the white delegation, was the relationship between the communist and African nationalist factions within the ANC. Again, to my own perspective it was, it was answered adequately in that, historically speaking, the so-called South African Communist party, and you must understand the word communist and communism in the South African context is an extraordinary flexible terminology. Anything that is for nonracialism has historically been quoted as being communist.

IRV DRASNIN
The question of communism isn't new to South African politics. The government has long used it to discredit opposition to apartheid. The ANC has long acknowledged its alliance with the South African Communist party in the fight to end apartheid.

MAC MAHARAJ
This is an alliance where both organizations are independent. They have, the Communist party, from the point of view of the ANC, has committed itself to our aims enshrined in the Freedom Charter. It has done so, in our view, without any hidden agenda because it has said that it is interested in the achievement and realization of the Freedom Charter because it believes that it will--this will create the conditions for the people to be mobilized by the Communist party in order to build a socialist society. But they are committed to that stop with us.

Irv Drasnin: How's that going to play back home?

Max du Preez, Afrikaner: It's one of the more difficult ones. We've been bombarded with so much indoctrination, most of it coming from America, by the way, about the real face of Marxism and the real face of the communists. I mean, you know, you can never trust them. I mean, of course this, these guys--or this is the whole argument. I know, I'm going to go back there. I think my argument will be...go and talk to these guys and look at them. Do they look like communists? Do they talk like communists? Get to know them. Maybe they're Marxists. Maybe they believe in Marxist, Marxist analysis. No skin off my nose. I'm scared, and what South Africa should really be scared of is, is...soviet imperialism or

Max du Preez continued: **whatever. And I mean, these guys--that's outrageous, they are not into that.**

IRV DRASNIN
The delegates moved from issue to issue, from place to place, the social occasions becoming as important as the formal discussions. Even here, each was being tested against the images and expectations of the other, as enemy or potential ally.

But even a diplomatic reception couldn't hide a fundamental disagreement over the strategy of violence in bringing about change in South Africa.

ALEX BORAINE
One of the major questions focused on the armed struggle, the violence which is endemic in South Africa, the violence by the state and the counterviolence.

FREDERICK VAN ZYL SLABBERT
And it would be, I think, just dishonest to argue that or to say that this was not an issue that occupied the minds very deeply and seriously of all the participants, and there were certain very clear divisions on this particular point of view.

IRV DRASNIN
There was no simple solution. But in the course of their debates, something unexpected happened. While rejecting violence as a means for change, Afrikaners accepted the reasons for an armed struggle and why it would continue.

ANDRE DU TOIT
And in our debates we have, I think, also accepted and put it so to the ANC, that we cannot but accept as a historical reality the ANC's commitment to the armed struggle. It is impossible to ask the ANC at this stage to renounce the armed struggle.

MAX DU PREEZ
Which to me is a remarkable, I think, it's the most remarkable thing of the entire conference, is that people from these two backgrounds could find that common ground where--that this group from inside South Africa could without trying to be radical or out-radicalize anyone else or whatever, be radical chic or any of that nonsense, sincerely accept that there was a reason why the ANC started the armed struggle. And there is probably, I

MAX DU PREEZ (continued)
think, with, for most of the guys a realization that it would be unrealistic for the ANC to end off the arms struggle straight away with no counterperformance on the other side. That, I found, was, was amazing. That was the most explosive issue in, and that didn't explode.

MAC MAHARAJ
It's not a question of, that we have won them over to become armed combatants or to join the ANC. But I think that they have begun to understand what drives a black man to struggle. What sort of commitment underlies--what determination underlies it. What does it mean when you address yourself to the question of freedom? What price freedom?

FREDERICK VAN ZYL SLABBERT
The group listened to and closely questioned perspectives, goals, strategies, and tactics of the ANC. The main area of concern arose over the ANC's resolve to maintain and intensify the armed struggle.

IRV DRASNIN
And in a joint communiqué, the Dakar Declaration, the ANC agreed that armed struggle was not the only way out.

FREDERICK VAN ZYL SLABBERT
The conference unanimously expressed preference for a negotiated resolution of the South African question. Participants recognized that the attitude of those in power is the principle obstacle to progress in this regard.

IRV DRASNIN
Before this final news conference ended, a sharp reminder of such obstacles--word of an assassination--reached Dakar and Thabo Mbeki.

Thabo Mbeki: **We've just been informed that a colleague of mine, a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, was killed in Swaziland on Wednesday. So I'm saying, death is part of the actuality of all the people who are here. And so when they say, we're ready to act together, we're ready to meet again, in order to reinforce this process of common action, different strategies no doubt, but**

Thabo Mbeki continued: **common action for a common goal, I think that's a very important achievement.**

IRV DRASNIN
What happened in Dakar wasn't a negotiation, neither side had such a mandate. But there emerged something without which there can be no negotiation.

MAX DU PREEZ
I think more myths and misunderstandings have been exploded in the last four days than probably the last three decades in South Africa. On both sides. And I think people will be unrealistic to expect the ANC to move ten steps to the right as from next week. Or fifty Afrikaner delegates going back to the Jan Smuts airport and say "amandla ngewethu" (power to the people). It's not the kind of stuff we're talking about. It's more subtle. It's, it's far more important than that, I think.

THABO MBEKI
The close personal contact over so many days, and the different circumstances, I think, has convinced them that the ANC is, means what it says. Because clearly, nobody could be on guard every day for eighteen hours for so many days, such that if you were deceiving them, nothing would slip out.

Frederick van zyl Slabbert: **Then let me state my position clearly. I have not the slightest problem in Thabo Mbeki being prime minister of my country, or my president. I mean, I have problems with him as a person. [Laughter] But I have no problem with him being prime minister.**

IRV DRASNIN
What had become important was not only the substance but the spirit of the meeting. After four days in Dakar, the press left. We stayed to record a private meeting, unlike any that had ever taken place in front of cameras.

Leaders of their delegations, Afrikaners and ANC, kept talking.

Thabo Mbeki: **What some of us are saying in this discussion is, take what may be--what has been called the quantum leap. Imagine yourself outside of these current processes of white politics. Now imagine a situation, imagine a situation**

Thabo Mbeki continued: **where van zyl Slabbert stands and joins the ANC. I hope one day he will do that. He joins the ANC and he stays, he stands as an ANC candidate at Waterkloof in Pretoria. He's white. He's Afrikaner. And he says to this constituency, "We want a nonracial and a democratic South Africa. We want a South Africa where you'll have the right to use your Afrikaans language. You'll have the right to belong to the Dutch Reform Church. Nobody's going to despise you. Nobody's going to nationalize your house. You'll have a situation where there'll be peace, where there will no longer be a need to put a policeman at every street corner, armed. As a kind of future you want to build on. And here I stand representing an organization who says those things. Vote for me." I think it would stand a very good chance of being elected.**

Herman Gilomee, Afrikaner: **What I'm thinking is, how do we get to that stage, you know. It could be that you, through various means, get the government to the negotiating table and they say okay, we'll form a government which is genuinely democratic. That could be. Or it could also be that it wouldn't come about that way and that we could then see but--how can we then win acceptance for you coming into the country?**

IRV DRASNIN
In confronting South Africa's future, they discovered again the need to confront their past.

Herman Gilomee: **Just take the question of history, history teaching in syllabus. Wouldn't it be better, wouldn't it be easier for whites if whites could feel, okay, we've got these...whites still in control of state schools. Or it could be semi-private schools. And that they rather preside over the transition where we change the history so that whites don't get so, quite a quick shock. They say, "Oh well,**

Herman Gilomee continued: I never knew such things existed." [Laughter]

Mac Maharaj: Maybe the best thing for our country, maybe the best thing is that the quantum leap that Thabo is speaking about needs, needs to have our people catapulted into it.

Pallo Jordan: Herman, look. What has been wrong with South African history is not that all the heroes were white and all the villains are black. What was wrong with South African history is that it was falsified. I mean, the very notion that South African history commences with the landing of Jan Van Riebeek, I mean, that is falsification. You see. Now if you start from that premise, you are bound to end up with that sort of lie, you see, which is in the history books.

Frederick van zyl Slabbert: I'll never forget, I'll never forget the first time I went to the Cango Caves, they switched off the lights and they put on nice glowing lights and soft music there in Oudtshoorn. And there was a voice that boomed through this huge cavern saying, "The history of South Africa started with the arrival of the white man in 1652." [Laughter] Most ridiculous thing I've ever seen in my life or heard in my life. But you see, that is what the average young Afrikaner is conditioned to: that you are not part of this history.

Thabo Mbeki: You see for instance, Herman says, I mean, what are we going to do now? The history at the moment has got white heroes. The future history will have black heroes. That's not, that's not, you see, again it's taking, as I'm saying, this frozen, racist past. There are white heroes. There are very many white heroes. Afrikaner white heroes.

Mac Maharaj: And there are black villains.

Thabo Mbeki: And there have been tremendous black villains ...and that, that's the context in which this future has got to operate.

Frederick van zyl Slabbert: Does the real resistance to change not lie in the civil service? You know, that's where the real--the army, the bureaucrats--who actually depend on the continuation of that state for their subsistence, for their livelihood, for their privilege. And in South Africa it's a fact that there are about six hundred thousand whites who are totally dependent on the continuation of the state structure for their survival. And that's where the real resistance lies. How do we cope with that? That, that to me is the crunch of, of transition in South Africa. We have, we've just bureaucratized ourselves into a position of impasse.

Thabo Mbeki: This point is very central to how we move from here to there. We've got to battle very, very hard to move as much of white South Africa as possible to understand that the, the security--we're talking about Afrikaners--the security of the Afrikaner people lies in a democratic South Africa. The thing that has produced apartheid to ensure the security of the Afrikaner people is the thing that's produced this crisis. You see, we've got to get this message across. It's not easy. We can't pretend it's easy. It's very difficult. We've got an opposing force which is going to resist. But it's a very important process of how we get from here to there. To get white South Africa to understand that they've got a place in this future. And that even in terms of self-interest, you know, let's have democracy.

Frederick van zyl Slabbert: The one thing that should not happen is to consolidate those people, to strengthen them, to assist in the extension of patronage and the extension of co-option. And this is a new area for us. In fact, I think it's an area which somehow is different to the kind of struggles in Russia in 1917 or in China or in France. There are elements that we can take there and learn from, but we have a problem here that...

Thabo Mbeki: **You mean we can learn something from the Russian revolution?**

Frederick van zyl Slabbert: **We can certainly learn something from the Russian revolution. How to avoid the mistakes they've made. [Laughter]**

IRV DRASNIN
The conference had ended, but not the journey. In the forty-year history of of apartheid, Afrikaners had never taken such a journey.

It wasn't merely a matter of geography but of identity. They'd broken ranks with Afrikaner rule, to find out for themselves about the ANC.

They'd broken out of their isolation, traveling from the heart of Afrikanerdom to the heart of Africa, to see it for themselves.

The journey had begun years earlier for some, like Beyers Naude, whose father was a founder of the Broederbond, the secret and powerful brotherhood of Afrikaners; who himself became head of the Dutch Reform Church, the ideological backbone of Afrikaner rule.

BEYERS NAUDE, Afrikaner
I was a typical Afrikaner. I subscribed to the policy of the Nationalist party. I preached apartheid, I practiced apartheid, I lived apartheid, and I enjoyed apartheid. It is only after that a fundamental change came, came into my life.

PIERRE CRONJE, Afrikaner
My brother, to this day, is a constituency chairman for the National party. So is my mother and father are still very much members of the National party. Yes, I did not have a tradition of being in the so-called white opposition. I lived the full catastrophe of Afrikaner nationalism.

PHILIP VERSTER, Afrikaner
People like my father, people like my grandfather, my grandfather is actually a policeman, a very senior policeman, he was a general, have definite problems with discussing South African realities with communists and radicals, whatever. And you see, this is the problem with Afrikaners and with young white people. You have to make a choice between what you know and the security you have and the appreciation you have within your own community. And you have to make a choice, that would imply a choice of conscience.

IRV DRASNIN
One Afrikaner who made that choice is Max du Preez, a journalist and still an Afrikaner.

MAX DU PREEZ
I don't want to suggest that the Afrikaners will have to stop being Afrikaners. I will never stop being an Afrikaner. I mean, my friends in the right wing would probably not agree with me. I think I'm a very good Afrikaner. I'll tell you about my impeccable credentials later. I mean, from the Boer War and the Great Trek right through. But they don't accept that. I think the Afrikaners--it's okay--let them be a group. Let them be a group. I mean, there's nothing wrong. They've got a wonderful history, a history that I'm immensely proud of, until, you know, not too long ago. Until the Anglo-Boer war. I mean, my people's history is really something to be proud of. The language is, is one that I love with a passion. It is a stunningly beautiful, young, vibrant language. And incidentally, one in which you can preach revolution so beautifully. So no, we don't want, we don't want Afrikanerdom to, to deny their, their being Afrikaners. But to get from here to where we've got to be, a hell of a lot of people will have to do what we've done--is to, is to shake, shake it off. Not being Afrikaners. But the ideological part of it.

IRV DRASNIN
After Senegal, one of Africa's few multi-party democracies, the South Africans were introduced to another ideology: the revolutionary, military dictatorship of Burkina Faso.

Here, in Ouagadougou, three thousand miles from home in a country most of them had never heard of, they discovered that apartheid and P. W. Botha are issues on the lips of school children.

Demonstrators: **Down with apartheid, down with Botha.**

IRV DRASNIN
For any South African, there was cause for reflection in the equatorial heat of the world's third poorest country, about to have its fourth coup d'etat in seven years.

Demonstrators: **Down with apartheid, down with Botha.**

IRV DRASNIN
Certainly for Afrikaners like Bram Viljoen, whose identical twin brother was once chief of the South African Defense Force, there was a growing awareness of how their presence here would be seen at home.

BRAM VILJOEN, Afrikaner
To the majority of Afrikaners at home, it amounts to high treason. It amounts to Afrikaners here selling out the cause of the white man in South Africa, the cause of the Afrikaner culture and identity, so-called identity. This is what it will mean in South Africa, unfortunately.

IRV DRASNIN
In South Africa, most Afrikaners see no future in one of their own, Beyers Naude--who might have stood as prime minister in Pretoria, standing instead with Thabo Mbeki in Ouagadougou--laying the cornerstone of a monument against apartheid.

Most Afrikaners take no comfort in white South Africans entering the gates of a presidential palace--in the company of the ANC.

For ten days in three African countries, they were welcomed where they had never been welcome, not by heads of state.

It would be misleading to exaggerate the importance of these events--but in Africa, as elsewhere, perceptions can mean as much as reality. Even the possible significance of a handshake from Jerry Rawlings, the leader of Ghana, wasn't lost on an Afrikaner thinking of home.

MAX DU PREEZ
We've all presented this as the Afrikaner-ANC summit. I'm not sure if that's true. Makes nice copy, though. But what is important is that the kids in the townships also saw it like that. They have this very, very dark future. Now we've seen all over the world what people do who are desperate, who have no future. And this is what we've been seeing in South Africa. Senseless violence. I mean, what kind of person would necklace, would put a tire around someone and burn him to death and laugh? And, and I mean this is, this is not trying to excuse the necklace. I mean, that's horrible. But I asked myself the question, how can nice people, ordinary kids, what, what drove them, what drives them to do that kind of thing? It's hopelessness. It's just seeing no hope in the future. Maybe we helped a little bit to give them a little bit of hope because they saw this as an Afrikaner-ANC summit.

IRV DRASNIN
A meeting in Accra, Ghana had the appearance of a summit, but the atmosphere of an open hearing on the politics of apartheid.

Here, where twenty years earlier African nations had considered a war of liberation against South Africa, the South Africans were met by a curious, and critical, audience.

Question from audience: **We'd like to call on the two delegations to try to address themselves to the suspicions that we have, and the misgivings that we have of this meeting. We think that there is an attempt to play up what the media is calling liberalism as against revolution, which is demanded by the situation in South Africa.**

IRV DRASNIN
Side by side in this public forum, they were faced with the challenge of African skepticism.

Thabo Mbeki: What I'd like to say from the point of view of the ANC is that we have no suspicions. There's a standard test, which we don't use only for white people. There's a standard test that we use for anybody who says, we're against apartheid. We say, act against it, act against it.

Frederick van zyl Slabbert: I mean, this is a common suspicion, that whites want to protect their skins now that things are changing, and they come to talk to the ANC. I can assure you, the whites who are trying to maintain the state of emergency are busy full-time protecting their skins at the expense of the majority of the people in that country. If I really wanted to protect my skin, as a white, and maintain my privileges and so on, the I would obviously join the South African offense force and support Botha. Because that's what he believes he wants to do. We believe as whites that the only way you can participate in South Africa is to abandon racial domination, is to seek common cause with your

van zyl Slabbert continued: fellow citizens there and build a new society.

IRV DRASNIN
Whatever their differences about a new society, Afrikaner and ANC agreed that a real summit--real negotiations--remain a long way off.

Mac Maharaj: The real negotiations are going to be about, first of all, a recognition that in the South African situation no group which has been historically conditioned to see itself as a racial group or an ethnic group should ever have the space to dominate all the peoples of South Africa.

Irv Drasnin: Black or white.

Mac Maharaj: Black or white.

Max du Preez: It's about power. It's about central power, who is going to call the shots in South Africa. That's why these guys in the ANC, and I truly go for that, say that there is no reforming apartheid. It's impossible. You can't reform apartheid. You've got to scrap it, scrap it, and, and share power. That's also the, the kind of South Africanism which is not real. We don't want to share power in their sense. Share power in your sense maybe. We want to really share power. We want to have the power in the hands of, of the majority of the people. And that's a process of allaying white fears.

Irv Drasnin: Which is black power.

Max du Preez: Which will be predominantly black I suppose, yes.

Irv Drasnin: How do you allay white fears of black vengeance under majority rule in South Africa?

Thabo Mbeki: In reality, in reality, I don't think this problem exists, of white fears of black vengeance. In reality, I don't think it exists. Because white South Africa lives with black South Africa every day. They work together and they rub shoulders every day. And white South Africa knows very, very well that there isn't even an instinct among our people to slaughter white people. They, occasionally some crazy white person will say, "Watch out for your black maids. They might put poison in your tea." White South Africa doesn't believe it.

IRV DRASNIN
Whatever white South Africa believes, the reaction to Dakar was a chorus of resistance, orchestrated by the far right of Afrikaner politics, the AWB, a response shared by many Afrikaners.

Eugene Terreblanche,
AWB leader: You don't speak or discuss the future of your country with communist-inspired bunch of terrorists, man. You fight them. The government is a people, my friend. The future government of this country is Afrikaner people, the Boer people.

IRV DRASNIN
Awaiting the delegates in South Africa was a charge of treason, a clear sign that negotiations with Afrikaners in Pretoria aren't the same as talks with dissident Afrikaners in Dakar.

After Dakar, the delegates would go their separate ways, back home or back into exile. But first they came here, to the Island of Goree.

For some two hundred years, millions of Africans were brought here, before being sent to the New World as slaves.

Together, they stood in a place where slavery and apartheid are treated equally, a fact not lost on a historian who studied at the University of Wisconsin.

PALLO JORDAN
We've always been hopeful that the struggle to abolish apartheid would not be as costly in human life as was the civil war in the United States but, just as it required war to bring about the end of slavery in the States, if that's what it takes to bring about the end of apartheid, we have to do it, not because we want to, but because humanity requires that it be done.

IRV DRASNIN
For black and white South Africans, all of them dissidents, it was a place to reflect on where they'd been and on where they were headed, knowing full well the journey wasn't over yet.

Bram Viljoen: **We're a part of Africa, we should seek the fellowship of Africa, we should share in the hardships of Africa. We should bring about hope and not despair in Africa, fellowship but not apartheid.**

Irv Drasnin: **What will it take to get the majority of your fellow Afrikaners to share that belief and conviction with you?**

Bram Viljoen: **It will take time. It will take effort. It, it may take a form of holocaust. But let's hope it's not going to be that.**

Irv Drasnin: **The South African government says it's going to step up its campaign against the ANC. The ANC says it will intensify the armed struggle. What happens next?**

Thabo Mbeki: **Well, that's what will happen next. The ANC has to intensify the struggle in, the armed struggle, the political struggle, has to. And I think it's natural that the regime must hit back as hard as it can. I think it's clear we are in, into a continuing process of a sharpening confrontation.**

IRV DRASNIN
They had come as old enemies, looking for ways to turn confrontation into compromise, hoping to leave behind the legacy if not the memories of their past.

Frederick van zyl Slabbert: **We have come here not because we agree on everything, our past histories have trapped us into misunderstandings and conflict. But we have come here, in a sense, to escape the worst of that history and to build on what is good in it. One of the phrases that I read in the slave quarters was a prayer. It said, "God, let my people, who have suffered much, be great." We have experienced some of the greatness of the people of Senegal, who have transcended that past. I think the prayer of Goree should become the prayer also of South Africa.**

IRV DRASNIN
It would be tempting to end this story here, with "God Bless Africa," the South African hymn the ANC has made its anthem.

Dakar seemed an important break in the tragic history of South Africa, an affirmation that all South Africans share a common humanity as well as a common homeland.

But the story doesn't end so easily, not inside South Africa.

In a black township, less than a month after Dakar, the leaders of the Afrikaner delegation joined this procession of mourners. They came here to help bury a black co-worker, killed in the fight against apartheid.

There's no telling how far in this journey they've come, or have yet to go, only that for black and white South Africans, the message is the same.

Alex Boraine: **The struggle was his life, and the struggle was his death. We have got to follow him. The struggle continues.**

JUDY WOODRUFF
The meetings in Dakar made headlines in South Africa, but the Botha government dismissed their importance.

No one was surprised.

The ANC members returned to exile in Zambia, where they live under constant threat of attack by the South African government as they coordinate what they see as a perpetual war of liberation in their homeland.

JUDY WOODRUFF (continued)
The white Afrikaners flew back to South Africa, some to face anger and reprisals--bitter family fights, and lost jobs.

For those who went to Senegal--black and white--the meetings were a dramatic personal journey of human contact and discovery.

But did these forbidden talks have any impact on the struggle inside South Africa?

For the present, their influence is subtle, serving to intensify the debate about whether Afrikanerdom should talk to the ANC at all.

But for the future, the meaning of the talks is clear--for one day, South Africa will need leaders, black and white, who know what it takes to move beyond history and talk about the future.

I'm Judy Woodruff. Good night.

FRONTLINE
with JUDY WOODRUFF

Written and Produced by
IRV DRASNIN

Associate Producers
KATHRYN BORAINE
TUG YOURGRAU
JOHN MATISSON

Camera
DON SELLERS
FRANCOIS MARAIS

Sound
FRANK TONHAZY
ANDREW THOMSON

Tape Editor
CLAYTON RAWSON

On-Line Editor
MARK YANG

Production Associate
XIAOYAN ZHAO

Post Production Services
TEATOWN VIDEO

An Irv Drasnin Production
for FRONTLINE

For FRONTLINE

Coordinating Producer
JANET McFADDEN

Director
PHILIP GAY

Segment Producer
TUG YOURGRAU

Post Production Supervisor
JUDY BANKS

Production Assistant
MERLE R. EISMAN

Production Secretary
LISA D. MENDES

Lighting Director
CHAS NORTON

Set Design
CLINT HEITMAN

Cameras
GREG MACDONALD
PETER DINGLE

Stage Manager
CHUCK ESTEY

Switcher
MARK HELMAN

Audio
DOUG MARTIN

Video
KARL LORENCIC
BILL FAIRWEATHER

Crane Crew
DAN LANG
DICK MARSH

Teleprompter
KATHY DENNEN

Videotape Recordists
FRANK COAKLEY
TOM PUGH

Hair
JOSEPH GRIFONI

Makeup
ELLIE EPSTEIN

Videotape Editors
MARK STEELE
JIM DEERING

Graphics
JACK FOLEY
ALISON KENNEDY

FRONTLINE theme by
MASON DARING
MARTIN BRODY

Promotion Director
MICKI GRIFFIN

Publicity
MARCY DeVEAUX
KELLY MILAN
TRACEY CLOUTIER

Associate Producers
MARSHA BEMKO
JOE ROSENBLOOM

Staff Producers
ELIZABETH ARLEDGE
ORLANDO BAGWELL

Secretaries
LETTY HUMMEL
LISA LEVINE
GINETTE MAYAS

Special Projects Assistant
KAREN ROACH

Unit Manager
ELAINE WITHROW

Business Manager
SUSAN MOTTAU

Director of Administration
KAI FUJITA

Series Editor
MARRIE CAMPBELL

Senior Producer
MICHAEL SULLIVAN

Executive Editor
LOUIS WILEY, JR.

Executive Producer
DAVID FANNING

A Granada Television Production
for FRONTLINE

WGBH Educational Foundation
©1987 all rights reserved

IRV DRASNIN, Narrator

FREDERICK VAN ZYL SLABBERT, Afrikaner

ALEX BORAINE, Afrikaner

THABO MBEKI, African National Congress

P. W. BOTHA, President of South Africa

PALLO JORDAN, ANC

MAC MAHARAJ, ANC

ANDRE DU TOIT, Afrikaner

CHRISTO NEL, Afrikaner

JAN GAGIANO, Afrikaner

MAX DU PREEZ, Afrikaner journalist

HERMAN GILOMEE, Afrikaner

BEYERS NAUDE, Afrikaner

BRAM VILJOEN, Afrikaner

For information about buying or renting a videocassette or film of any NOVA program contact Coronet Films & Video, 108 Wilmot Road, Deerfield, IL 60015 call: 1-800-621- 2131(Illinois and Alaska residents call collect (312)940-1290.

For information about buying or renting a videocassette of FRONTLINE, contact PBS Video, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314-1698 call: 1-800-424-7963 or (703) 739-5000.

VIDEOTAPE/FILM copies of other programs may be available for sale or rental, for visual and broadcast use. For information, contact:

WGBH Distribution, 125 Western Avenue, Boston, MA 02134
(617)-492-2777

TRANSCRIPTS of programs* are available in bulk and individually from:

(Title of Series)
(Title of Program)
Box 322
Boston, MA 02]34

Bulk Rate:
20 or more copies of any one program transcript can be supplied for a reduced price of $3/copy for a minimum order of 20 copies of one transcript. This offer is limited to programs broadcast since 1979.

Individual Copies
Programs from NOVA and other series since 1979 are available in most cases as printed booklets. Transcripts of NOVA programs from 1974 to 1978 are available in most cases as 8 1/2 x 11 photocopies.

Prices: $4/copy (1982-1986)
$6/copy (1974-1981)

Please make checks payable to "WGBH Transcripts." Do not send cash. ALLOW 4-6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY.

*For lists of titles available please send $1.00 to:
WGBH Transcript Catalogue
Box 322
Boston, MA 02134

NOVA TEACHER'S GUIDES are available for $2 per copy, to cover postage and handling. (Make checks payable to WGBH NOVA Teacher's Guides.) Address orders to:

WGBH NOVA Teacher's Guide
Box 2222
South Easton, MA 02375

FRONTLINE
WGBH TV
125 Western Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02134

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
WGBH Educational
Foundation

UCLA Drasnin
DR200401